

American and Soviet Women in the 1920s

Online learning unit appropriate for grades 11 – college. This lesson plan is appropriate for American/World/European or Women in American History courses.

This learning unit is ideal for an online learning environment. It consists of several lengthy handouts (primary documents) that the students will read and then complete several different writing activities. At the end of the lesson, students will then find their own primary documents to read and share with their classmates. This lesson plan can be adapted to a flipped classroom experience in which the students read the primary documents at home and then come to class ready to discuss what they read. If you are running this lesson plan as an in-person activity, I would cut out the summary writing assignments but still have the students turn in the Venn Diagrams.

Learning Objective – By the end of this activity, students will be able to compare and contrast the various expectations that were placed upon women in American and the Soviet Union in the 1920s.

The Lesson Plan -

Students will read two different sets of primary documents, one set that focuses on women in America in the 1920s and the other that focuses on women in the Soviet Union in the 1920s.

At the end of each set of primary documents, the students will then write two paragraphs summarizing what they have learned from reading that set of documents. This activity makes it ideal for an online setting because students could then post those summaries into a discussion forum.

After the students have completed reading both sets of primary documents, the students will then make a Venn Diagram comparing the different expectations that American and Soviet women faced in the 1920s. Again, this activity would lend itself well to an online discussion forum, but students could also make these Venn Diagrams in class.

After the students have completed their Venn Diagrams, they will then help add to this activity by finding additional primary documents related to women in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. Students will find these documents, read them, and then again summarize them. As part of this summary, the students will compare the new document that they found to the documents that they have already read about women in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. They will need to answer if this new document with new information is consistent with what they already read with regards to women in the Soviet Union during the 1920s.

This activity is designed to be a solo learning experience, especially if it is in an online setting. This activity can be adopted to an in person setting in which students are partnered off and they discuss the reading amongst themselves. If this is the case, students should still turn in their own Venn Diagrams and find their own additional primary documents.

Instructions for the students -

In this activity we will be learning about women in America and the Soviet Union during the 1920s. Before we begin, however, let's pause for one second and think about what we already know about this topic.

What comes to mind when you hear "American and Soviet women in the 1920s?"

Did you think about the so-called “Roaring 20s”? Have you seen the film or read the book *The Great Gatsby*? How about flappers, or maybe the 19th Amendment? How do you think American women experienced life in the 1920s? Do you think all women had the same experiences? Do you think race and class shaped the kinds of experiences that women had in American in the 1920s?

Let’s shift gears and focus on women in the Soviet Union – what comes to mind? Are you drawing a blank? That’s ok, lets dig a little deeper. We know that the Russian Revolution was in 1917, and this event must have had an impact on women. Can you speculate on how the overthrow of the Tsarist regime may have impacted women? We also know about Russian women in America such as activist Emma Goldman. What can we remember about her and what she advocated for?

Now that you have had some time to think about what life was like for women in American and the Soviet Union in the 1920s, let’s dive into the documents. The first set of documents that we are going to read focus on women in America in the 1920s. As you read these documents (there are many that are condensed into 14 pages of text and images) please consider the following question:

What is this so-called New Woman? What expectations are placed upon women in America during the 1920s?

Note, as you read this online set of documents, you may want to take notes.

<http://americainclass.org/sources/becomingmodern/modernity/text2/colcommentarymodernwoman.pdf>

Now that you have finished reading the set of documents (all the pages) please answer the following question.

In at least two paragraphs (each paragraph is at least 250 words in length) please summarize what you have learned in this set of primary documents. In doing so, please answer the question: *what is this so-called New Woman?* While you are summarizing this set of documents on American women in the 1920s, please directly reference at least four different primary documents.

At the bottom of your paragraphs, please include your citations in MLA format.

The following is the grading rubric that will be used to assess this portion of the assignment.

Criteria	Full Marks	Partial Marks	No Marks
Length of summary 2 points	The summary is at least two paragraphs in length (each paragraph is at least 250 words)	The summary is less than 2 paragraphs in length and/or each paragraph is less than 250 words.	The summary is substantially less than 2 paragraphs in length and/or each paragraph is substantially less than 250 words.
Use of sources 2 points	The summary includes direct reference to at least 4 of the sources that were included in	The summary includes direct reference to 2-3 of the sources that were included in the	The summary includes direct references to 1 or no sources that were included in the

	the American women primary document set.	American women primary document set.	American women primary document set.
Citations 1 point	Citations referencing the various primary documents mentioned in the summary are included at the end of the summary and are in MLA format.	Citations referencing the various primary documents mentioned in the summary are included at the end of the summary but may be incomplete or are not in MLA format.	Citations are not included at the end of the summary.
Summary of the primary documents 2 points	The summary displays critical reading skills and it is clear that the student has read the entire set of documents.	The summary displays limited analysis or critical thinking skills, it is also unclear of the student read the entire set of documents.	The student's summary is lacking in some substantial way. It may not be a summary of the set of documents at all but a collection of random quotes from the document set.
Answers the central question <i>What is this so-called American New Woman?</i> 2 points	Throughout the summary, the student uses the primary documents to describe what a so-called New Woman was in America in the 1920s.	The student references the central question in their summary but fails to use the primary documents to adequately describe what this so-called New Woman was.	The student's summary does not reference the central question of describing what this so-called New Woman in America in the 1920s was.

Now that we have read the first set of documents and learned about women in America in the 1920s, let's switch gears and focus on Soviet women in the 1920s. In order to do this, we will read a few different documents.

The first document that we will read is not a primary document but a bit of background context which will be helpful for you to understand the other documents. Please begin by reading this short handout.

<http://exhibitions.globalfundforwomen.org/exhibitions/women-power-and-politics/appearance/emancipated>

After you had read about how women were important for the Soviet Union and their frequent use as propaganda images, let's dive into the actual primary documents. The first short article is titled "Resolution on the Role of Working Women" and focuses on how important women will be in ensuring the success of the Soviet experiment.

<https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/1st-congress/women.htm>

The next primary document that we are going to read is our long document for this series. Again, this document was created by the Congress of the Communist International, and it is a report on how important women's labor is for the survival of Communism. As you read it, please think of the following questions.

How did this document and its creators envision what it meant to be a liberated woman? Is this definition different or similar to the ideas put forward in our primary document set about American women?

<https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/3rd-congress/women-theses.htm>

After you finished reading that document, please read our last primary document for this activity. This is a shorter document that again focuses on women's labor and emancipation under the Soviet system.

<https://chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/modules/lesson11/lesson11.php?s=1>

Now that you have finished reading the set of documents (all three primary documents plus the background reading) please answer the following question.

In at least two paragraphs (each paragraph is at least 250 words in length) please summarize what you have learned in this set of primary documents. In doing so, please answer the question: *under the Soviet system, what did it mean to be a liberated woman?*

While you are summarizing this set of documents on Soviet women in the 1920s, please directly reference all three primary documents.

At the bottom of your paragraphs, please include your citations in MLA format.

The following is the grading rubric that will be used to assess this portion of the assignment.

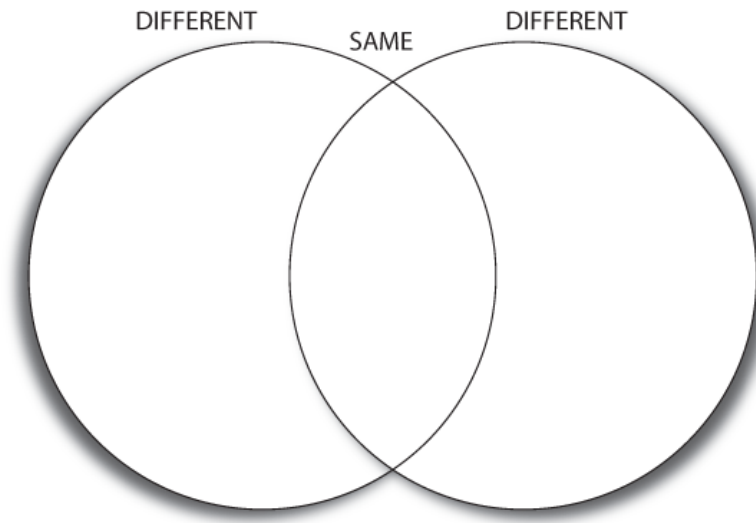
Criteria	Full Marks	Partial Marks	No Marks
Length of summary 2 points	The summary is at least two paragraphs in length (each paragraph is at least 250 words)	The summary is less than 2 paragraphs in length and/or each paragraph is less than 250 words.	The summary is substantially less than 2 paragraphs in length and/or each paragraph is substantially less than 250 words.
Use of sources 2 points	The summary includes direct reference to all 3 of the primary sources that were included in the Soviet women primary document set.	The summary includes direct reference to 2 of the primary sources that were included in the Soviet women primary document set.	The summary includes direct reference to 1 or no sources that were included in the Soviet women primary document set.

Citations 1 point	Citations referencing the various primary documents mentioned in the summary are included at the end of the summary and are in MLA format.	Citations referencing the various primary documents mentioned in the summary are included at the end of the summary but may be incomplete or are not in MLA format.	Citations are not included at the end of the summary.
Summary of the primary documents 2 points	The summary displays critical reading skills and it is clear that the student has read the entire set of documents.	The summary displays limited analysis or critical thinking skills, it is also unclear if the student read the entire set of documents.	The student's summary is lacking in some substantial way. It may not be a summary of the set of documents at all but a collection of random quotes from the document set.
Answers the central question <i>under the Soviet system, what did it mean to be a liberated woman?</i> 2 points	Throughout the summary, the student uses the primary documents to describe what it meant to be a liberated woman under the Soviet system in the 1920s.	The student references the central question in their summary but fails to use the primary documents to adequately describe what it meant to be a liberated woman under the Soviet system in the 1920s.	The student's summary does not reference the central question of describing what it meant to be a liberated woman under the Soviet system in the 1920s.

After you have completed both summaries, it is time to compare and contrast American and Soviet women. More specifically, we are going to compare and contrast the different expectations that were placed on these women during the 1920s.

Next you will make a Venn Diagram which consists of two interlocking circles, above one of the circles you will write American women, and the other you will write Soviet women. Above the interlocking portion you will write same. You will then fill out this comparison chart by answering the following question.

Venn Diagram



What expectations were placed upon Soviet and American women in the 1920s?

While filling out this Venn Diagram, please be as detailed as possible. Each circle should have at least 5 main points and using direct quotes to make those points would be best. If you would like a template Venn Diagram, you can use the following link.

https://www.educationworld.com/tools_templates/venn_diagram_templates.shtml

The following is the grading rubric that will be used to assess this portion of the assignment.

Criteria	Full Marks	Partial Marks	No Marks
Number of entries 5 points	Each circle (both the American women and Soviet women) has at least 5 entries that are distinct. The center category (both) may or may not have any entries (but most likely will have a few).	Each circle (both the American women and the Soviet women) has less than 5 entries that are distinct.	Each circle has substantially less entries than the minimum.
Quality of entries 5 points	Each entry is carefully chosen to answer the central question for this assignment and in doing so, displays a	Entries that are chosen may be vague and therefore do not adequately demonstrate an understanding of the content.	Entries are substantially lacking in some way. They may be one-word answers or generalizations that do not display an

	deep understanding of the content.		understanding of the content in this learning unit.
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Homework -

In this leaning unit we have learned quite a bit about American and Soviet women in the 1920s, but there is always more to learn.

Your homework for this unit is to find one additional Soviet primary document that focuses on women in the 1920s. This primary document can be written text (which is preferred) or some other media source, such as a song or an image. Whatever you source may be, you must make sure that it is a primary source.

After you have found your source, please read/access it and then summarize the source like you did after reading the primary documents for American and Soviet women.

Here are the instructions:

In at least two paragraphs (each paragraph is at least 250 words in length) please summarize what you have learned in this primary document. In doing so, please answer the question: *Does this support what we have learned in our other primary document set about Soviet women in the 1920s, or does this document display women in another light?*

At the bottom of your paragraphs, please include your citations in MLA format.

The following is the grading rubric that will be used to assess this portion of the assignment.

Criteria	Full Marks	Partial Marks	No Marks
Length of summary 2 points	The summary is at least two paragraphs in length (each paragraph is at least 250 words)	The summary is less than 2 paragraphs in length and/or each paragraph is less than 250 words.	The summary is substantially less than 2 paragraphs in length and/or each paragraph is substantially less than 250 words.
Use of sources 2 points	The summary includes direct reference to the one new primary document that focuses on women in the 1920s.	The summary includes a vague reference to the one new primary document that focuses on women in the 1920s.	The summary does not reference the new primary document that needed to be found for this assignment.
Citations 1 point	the citation referencing the primary document that is mentioned in the summary is included at the end of the summary and are in MLA format.	The citations referencing the primary document that is mentioned in the summary is included at the end of the summary but may be incomplete or are not in MLA format.	Citations are not included at the end of the summary.

Summary of the primary documents 2 points	The summary displays critical reading skills and it is clear that the student has read the new primary document.	The summary displays limited analysis or critical thinking skills, it is also unclear of the student read the new primary document.	The student's summary is lacking in some substantial way. It may not be a summary of the document at all but a collection of random quotes.
Answers the central question – <i>Does this document support what was said about Soviet women or does this document challenge what we have learned?</i> 2 points	Throughout the summary, the students uses the primary document explain if the information in this new document supports or refutes what we have already learned about Soviet women.	The student references the central question in their summary but fails to use the primary documents to adequately describe if this document supports or refutes what we have already learned about Soviet women.	The student's summary does not reference the central question of describing if this document supports or refutes what we have already learned about Soviet women.